



Twitter Opera Performed by #sinfoniettariga

Sinfonietta Rīga performed what is most likely the world's first twitter opera. They aimed at engaging the audience through social media, and got a lot of attention.

Background

Sinfonietta Rīga is a chamber orchestra based in Riga, the capital of Latvia. It has been established in 2006 as a state orchestra and currently resides at Spīķeru Concert Hall.

The main ambition of the orchestra is to perform at the highest professional level while being open to different genres of music ranging from baroque to the most contemporary compositions. The musicians of the orchestra are ready to experiment in both academic and non-academic musical directions.

Concept

The main piece of the concert was the Twitter Opera *Nostra Culpa* created by young Estonian composer Eugene Birman. *Nostra Culpa* retells the heated Twitter discussion in June 2012 between the president of Estonia, Toomas Ilves and American economist Paul Krugman, debating the status quo of the economic situation in Estonia.

The economical crisis has been a much debated topic in Latvia and artistic director of Sinfonietta Rīga decided to take this challenge to explore how social media and contemporary arts can reflect political and economic paradigms.

The concert took place at an atypical venue, The Design Factory in a suburb of Riga. It is part of an industrial area where jet engines were produced during the Soviet era.

Aims and goals

- Diversify the contemporary repertoire of the ensemble
- Attract new audiences with a non-typical concert in a unique venue
- Use the concert as a marketing platform for the ensemble

Target audience

The main target audience was users of digital and social media in Latvia which is younger than the common Sinfonietta Rīga audience. The ensemble aimed at engaging the audience through social

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media for example by inviting them to tweet about the concert using #sinfoniettariga.

In short, the target groups were:

- Young professionals around the age of 30
- Trend setters who can influence the opinions of the society
- People who were not their usual concert attendees

Process

The process prior to the concert can be divided into three categories:

- Artistic production: Choice of repertoire, contact with soloists
- Technical production: Setting up the venue, logistics, additional service staff
- Marketing promotion: Producing promotion material, posters, flyers, banner, radio advertising, contacting various media, promoting through social media

Risks

The risks related to the concert were:

- The concert was technically difficult as the venue was not adapted as a concert place. It took more planning than usual.
- The venue was difficult to find for the audience. The ensemble pointed out the location of the Design Factory in the marketing material, and prepared a banner that guided the audience to the venue.
- The audience might feel uncomfortable in such an unusual venue. Extra service staff was engaged to help audience find their way and feel comfortable, interior design was adapted to create a special atmosphere – candles, candlesticks, lights etc.

Outcome

- The concert was a very good marketing tool to promote the orchestra. The orchestra appeared in many medias, also those that were not oriented towards arts and culture.
- Great feed back from musicians who had a chance to experiment and play under unusual conditions.
- Sinfonietta Rīga raised its brand awareness amongst the audience.
- The social media promotion attracted new followers on Facebook and Twitter.

Budget

Cost of the project: 8647,34EUR

Artistic expenses – 2965,86EUR

Technical expenses – 4240,93EUR

Marketing expenses – 1383,10EUR

Conclusions and recommendations

The concert was effective in terms of promoting and branding the ensemble. The unusual form, contemporary and catchy content of the Twitter Opera attracted a lot of attention in the media. The event was represented in TV, radio, news papers, websites and social media, and was attended by trend setter.

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Contemporary music is very well accepted by audience in non traditional concert spaces, but accessibility of the space is important. People are willing to go to “unusual” places in summer, but not in colder seasons with dark evenings making it an extra challenge to find the concert venue. This kind of project may not be profitable, but might be effectively used as a marketing tool for the ensemble.

Sinfonietta Rīga will continue building an image as a daring, experimenting ensemble. For similar projects in the future, they would once again create a unique programme of contemporary music and emphasize the most attractive and new aspects of the concert, as the Twitter Opera in this case.

Facts

Ensemble: State Chamber Orchestra Sinfonietta Rīga 34 musicians are involved

Soloists: Iris Oja, mezzo-soprano; Guna Āboltiņa, cello

Conductor: Normunds Šnē

Date and time: October 18th 2013, 7pm

Venue: Dizaina Fabrika, Riga, Latvia

Programme:

Eugene Birman: *Nostra culpa*

Magnus Lindberg: *Jubilees*

Witold Lutoslawski: *Grave*

Jean-Marie Rens: *Monolythe*

Francisco Coll: *Piedras*

Working community: Exploring Venues and Concert Formats

Further information: www.sinfoniettariga.lv